

IS MY CHILD USING DRUGS? _____

Young people use drugs for many reasons that have to do with how they feel about themselves, how they get along with others, and how they live. No one factor determines who will use drugs and who will not, but here are some predictors:

- *early initiation of substance use;*
- *attitudes favorable toward drug use;*
- *friends' substance use;*
- *perceived risks of substance use;*
- *sensation seeking;*
- *perceived availability of substances; and*
- *parental attitudes favorable toward substance use*

First, rule out any physical illness with a trip to the doctor. Ask the doctor to evaluate for depression or other emotional causes as well. If there is a clean bill of health, and the symptoms are still present, locate a professional (psychiatrist, psychologist or counselor) with experience in adolescent drug use.

▼ Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms to adolescents who are using drugs. Is my child:

- *Withdrawn, depressed, tired, or neglecting personal grooming?*
- *Hostile, uncooperative, and frequently breaking curfew?*
- *Suffering from deteriorating relationships with family members?*
- *Hanging out with a new group of friends and unwilling to introduce them?*
- *Skiping school and experiencing dropping grades?*
- *Losing interest in hobbies, sports, and other favorite activities?*
- *Exhibiting red eyes or runny noses without evidence of allergies or a cold?*
- *Responsible for taking household money without permission?*
- *The possible source of any of the following items in the home: pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, baby pacifiers, unidentified pills, incense, drug-related books, comics, magazines, locked boxes or containers.*

Positive answers to any of these questions can indicate an alcohol or other drug problem. However, these signs may also apply to a child who is not using drugs but who may be having other problems at school or in the family. If you are in doubt, get help. Have your family doctor or local clinic examine your child to rule out illness or other physical problems.

▼ Additional Information

For additional information on youth and substance abuse, visit the websites of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (www.drugabuse.gov), and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (www.sahsa.gov/centers.csap/csap.html).



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